Number I.

A

LIBERAL CRITIQUE

ON THE

EXHIBITION for 1794.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Entered at Stationer's Hall.

A

LIBERAL CRITIQUE

ON THE

PRESENT EXHIBITION

OF THE

ROYAL ACADEMY:

BEING

An attempt to correct the National Taſte; to aſcertain the ſtate of the Polite Arts at this Period; and to reſcue Merit from Oppreſſion.

BY ANTHONY PASQUIN, ESQ.

A NEW EDITION.

Caſtigatio fine ira.

LONDON:

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MDCCXCIV.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the limitation and haſte neceſſary in this Work, ſo much dependent on time, precludes me from entering into an enlarged Critique, I have only commented upon the principal performances of thoſe Artiſts who are moſt conſpicuous in their ſeveral departments: the remainder (the majority of whom are ſcarce worth powder and ſhot) I have now left unnoticed, either to become more meritorious, or to be entirely forgotten. In a few inſtances I have availed myſelf of the opinion of others.

This Work will be continued occaſionally, under the Title of

THE STATE OF THE ARTS AND THE DRAMA;

which is a Performance, very generally deſired, as it is notorious, from the influence of tyranny and corruption, that a candid criticiſm on either is ſcarcely ever ſeen.

ERRATUM.

In Page 10—For *palpable ſublime* read *palpable outline.*

A CRITIQUE

ON THE EXHIBITION.

JOHN OPIE, R. A. No. 29.

THIS is the beſt of four portraits by the ſame artiſt, and is a very ſignificant likeneſs of Mr. Fuzeli, one of thoſe ungrateful and indolent R. A.'s who leave their academic mother to be illumined and ſupported by the ſtriplings of the eſtabliſhment. Mr. Opie has not brought forward this year any thing to ſurprize the world: he has retained all his old habits, and ſome of them are bad enough—an indifferent ſpectator would be led to imagine, that he was concerned in a coarſe woollen manufactory, as he ſeizes all poſſible occaſions to array his perſonages in that ſpecies of apparel, from an emperor to a mendicant, and I believe would bury all his heroes and heroines in the ſame drapery, notwithſtanding an exiſting act of Parliament, to prohibit the meaſure—his ſtyle of colouring becomes, in my opinion, more defective every year; it is now in all his fleſh, but little more then black and white, imperfectly amended by the mixture of brown oker! or ſome ingredient equally fatal to the purpoſes of truth. If he is impelled to do this, for the means of producing a *ſtriking effect*, as they phraſe it, I will beg leave to ſuggeſt that the means are not proportioned to the end.

It is with regret that I feel myſelf compelled to animadvert with rigour, upon a gentleman, who is certainly diſtinguiſhed from the *daubing herd* by ſome genius, but it has been impreſſed with vulgar ideas, which too frequently overbear the delicate interpoſitions of taſte, which he has faintly imbibed from ſtudying the works of the late Preſident: we have to lament, that original prejudices are ſo difficult to expunge from the mind. Thoſe elements which we firſt acquire, leave an indelible impreſſion upon the memory, and the utmoſt that the moſt vigorous judgment can do, at a mature time of exiſtence, is not to practiſe what the fancy has been accuſtomed to adopt.

G. DUPONT, No. 268.

Mr Quick in the Character of Spado.

This is a ſpirited likeneſs of that excellent Comedian, but executed too much in imitation of the late Mr. Gainſborough: The general outline is nearly faithful; but the affectation, viſible in thoſe ſcratches of the hogtool or fitch, over the viſage, is diſguſting, becauſe it is unnatural. This was the gigantic error in his uncle's portraits, who, perhaps in imitation of Apelles, was accuſtomed, in the moments of deſperation, to make a daſh where he could not draw. This portrait is intended for Mr. Harris's gallery, who has engaged this Artiſt to paint the principal performers of Covent-Garden Theatre.

No. 85. *A Portrait of* HIS MAJESTY, *by the ſame Artiſt.*

I have been often inclined to imagine, that the beams of that divinity which is ſaid to hedge a king, dazzles the optics too forcibly of every Artiſt who *attempts* to paint them. The figure of the King appears unamiable, preſuming, and repulſive; yet all this may be the effect of tremor: and the glare of the ſcarlet drapery burſts impudently upon our ſenſes, and repels the inquiſitiveneſs of thought, by abaſhing our inquiries in the firſt inſtance. The calm dignity which ſhould appertain to ſuch a perſonage is not diſcoverable: It gives me the idea of a proud ideot, preſenting himſelf for admiration, under the conſciouſneſs of being unuſually fine, and not as the repreſentation of the ſource of local honor. As the ſovereign is not noticeable for effrontery or vanity, this portrait is not adequate to my deſires.

THOMAS STOTHARD, R. A. Elect. No. 148.

The Interview between Henry VIII, and the Emperor Charles V.

I congratulate the Royal Academy on the acquiſition of ſuch a member as Mr. Stothard, whoſe education and underſtanding enables him to reſcue the general character of a Royal Academician from the imputation of ignorance, and whoſe urbane manners render his pre-eminence tolerable to all. I do not heſitate to aſſert, that this gentleman is the *only* Artiſt in this country who can comprehend, with keen preciſion, a ſubject dependent upon hiſtorical fact. It is to be regretted that his figures are not ſufficiently finiſhed, but occaſionally betray a flovenlineſs that is incompatible with truth: though the energies of a ſtrong mind, are too frequently regardleſs of neceſſary

ceſſary littleneſſes, yet the frequency of the omiſſion muſt not be permitted to juſtify the inattention.

William Hamilton, R. A. No. 70.

The loſt Kid found.

This picture is a pretty, but not a capital performance. It has all that *flutter of ſtyle* for which our young Artiſts are now ſo ridiculouſly remarkable. The light is ſo ſcattered, that it looks like luminouſneſs run mad. The nymph who has caught the kid, looks too aerial, and appears to poſſeſs the powers of journeying between heaven and earth. The pencilling of the fleſh is delicate, and the kid not ill imagined. I muſt not diſmiſs theſe obſervations without declaring, that on ſome former occaſions Mr. Hamilton has very forcibly ſeized my approbation.

No. 89. *The playful Galatea, from Virgil's third Paſtoral, by the ſame Artiſt.*

This is not a bad perſonification of a claſſic idea; but is far from being a chaſte picture. Mr. Hamilton appears to me to have imbibed no fixed principles of truth, as he changes his manner as frequently as his garment; and though to be a manneriſt in trifles is wrong, not to be a manneriſt in eſſentials, which are immutable, is more faulty. Though grace and greatneſs ſhould concentrate, and be palpable in every hiſtorical deſign, yet they are frequently miſunderſtood by our Artiſts, which gives an air of lunacy to their compoſitions. Grace may attach itſelf to objects in their nature trivial, but greatneſs cannot: whenever I ponder upon greatneſs, my imagination preſents *Michael Angelo*, who uſurps the idea.

Mr. Shee. No. 5.

A Portrait of Miſs Jerningham.

Delicate, free, and ſatisfactory: the attitude is graceful, and the face intereſting, it has the bland properties of virgin merit, unconſcious of vanity.

No. 291. *A whole length Portrait of Mrs. Larkins.*

The contour of this figure does not entirely pleaſe me, though it is equal in aggregate merit, to any whole length in the exhibition. The white ſattin drapery appertaining to this picture is nearly equal to Sir Peter Lely: there is a faſcination in the

repreſentation of this charming lady's viſage, which has due operation upon the obſervant, although, they have placed her in a corner of the anti-room, as if it was neceſſary that ſhe ſhould perform quarantine previous to her introduction into better ſociety. But let the beauty and the artiſt be comforted.

——" Where *ſtupid* men bear ſway
" The poſt of honor is a private ſtation."

No. 263. *Jepthah's Daughter, by the ſame Artiſt.*

Promiſes every thing that is ſublime in the art: in the material point of conception of his ſubject, he is ſuperior to the Preſident, and nearly equal to Mr. Stothard, his full acquirement of the ſubordinate requiſites, may be produced by unremitting induſtry. To think correctly, is but the lot of few; to draw correctly, may be accompliſhed by all.

No. 2. *A Portrait of Mr. Rannie, by the ſame Artiſt.*

This portrait, independant of the likeneſs, which is admirably impreſſive, is unqueſtionably one of the beſt, if not the very beſt, in the preſent meager exhibition; and yet from ſome mean and malign influence it is affixed at the very top of the room. If the nobleſt exertions of the art, are to be on all occaſions locally diſhonored, where will be found the man of diſtinguiſhed talents, who will be ready enough to bring his pictures forward, to be neither more nor leſs than annual ſacrifices, to the jealouſy of an *academic junto*; who ſit jocund in their *huggur-muggur* congreſs, happy only in having it in their ability to inſult ſafely ſuperior beings, and blighting the wholeſome bloſſoms of modeſt genius. I will be bold to prophecy, that from ſuch an inſtitution, the public will turn with diſguſt, and leave ſuch miſerably gifted animals, as the knight of Poland, to conſole each other from ſources, which greatneſs nor virtue knows not. This is one of thoſe low injuries which the oppreſſed is denied the opportunity of redreſſing; if he remains ſilent under ſuch diſtreſſing and abaſing circumſtances, it will be readily conjectured that he ſuppoſes himſelf to have received the uſage he is legally entitled to, and if he ventures ſpiritedly to aſſert his defence, the malevolent many, will not heſitate to impute that to arrogance and vanity, which is the legitimate and honorable iſſue of honeſt indignation. If the primary places in the exhibition were occupied by works of great and genuine merit, the candid critic would be ſatisfied, but to behold eternally the moſt deſpicable daubings obtruding

ing themſelves upon the gazer's eye, and, as it were, ſaying, "damme you ſhall look at me," is extremely painful to all thoſe, who would generouſly prefer talents to ſtupidity, and modeſty to impudence; ſo much is dependant upon ſituation, that the works of Tintoret and Titian, would be diſregarded if hung up in obſcure corners, where the light of heaven was imperfectly adminiſtered; were even Cæſar repoſing in a coal hole, we muſt be told it was Cæſar, ere we ſhould feel inclined to ſuppoſe him godlike, or revere his perſon; if the place is not appropriate to the picture, the artiſt muſt ſuffer in the common eſtimation of patronage, however ſtrong his claims may be, ariſing from his intrinſic worth. How lamentable it is, that there is no preciſe way of amending this abuſe of power: if the aggrieved artiſt applies to the council, he is informed that his being permitted to exhibit at all, is an act of favour, as the annual diſplay of the art, belongs of right, only to the Royal Academicians, who, however, think it expedient to *invite* other profeſſors to ſtrengthen the exhibition, and as ſtrangers they ſhould give them welcome, and not take every opportunity to inſult them, merely becauſe they are inveigled within their gates—what ſort of an exhibition the Royal Academicians would produce among themſelves, I ſhall leave the world to determine.

B. West, R. A. Preſident.

No. 8. *Edward, the Black Prince, receiving John, King of France, Priſoner, after the Battle of Poictiers.*

This *large piece of canvas* is intended for His Majeſty's Audience-Chamber in Windſor Caſtle, and certainly does no additional credit to its author, as the ſubject is ill underſtood, and not well executed: Though it is the preſumed aſſemblage of warriors, and immediately after a hard fought battle, their faces are as placid, and their habiliments as trim, as if no ſuch event had occurred, or was in agitation. The idea of the horſes is aſſuredly borrowed from Mr. Bayes's cavalry; and the poſition of the Cardinals, entirely accords with the received notion of ultramontane affection.

No. 132. *The Deſcent of the Spirit upon Jeſus, after his Baptiſm in Jordan, by the ſame Artiſt.*

The waters of Jordan were certainly of a ſingular nature, if the ſplaſhings of this hallowed ſtream are conveyed by the pencil

cil with aquatic juſtneſs. They have the green hue of a ſtagnate pool, and not the liquid tranſparency of a limpid brook. The figure of Chriſt looks like a deſerter, who had been recently whipped, and was ſneaking off to a ſurgeon, with a blanket over his wounds. The figure of John is finely drawn, and the Child beautifully imagined. The identity of Mr. Weſt's figures is ſo continually apparent, that I believe he has a few favourite domeſtics, who are the Saints and Demons of his neceſſities.

If it is not ludicrous, it is impious, that ſuch a perſonification as this ſhould be made public for vulgar contemplation. It is paying a poſthumous obeiſance to the artifices of wily prieſts in the darkeſt ages of Chriſtianity. It muſt be extremely painful to the wiſe, to behold the Spirit of God pourtrayed as a dove, and even God himſelf occaſionally as an imbecile old man! What tranſcends our comprehenſion, ſhould not be wantonly ſuppoſed by folly. "There is a point which mortals cannot approach but in glimmering thought, it is that which borders on an intellectual image of the *univerſal Spirit*; the great *mind of the univerſe*; who, in the motions of a ſubtle fluid, ſuited to the viſual organ, illuminates the world; who lives in the perfect action of ſubſtance; the purity of nature: How can we conceive of that which ſurpaſſes ſenſe, but by means of what we know? How proceed to juſt inference, but by ſome clear rule of analogy?" Yet, in contempt of ſuch awful conviction, will a callow Artiſt give to the moſt ſacred myſteries,

"a local habitation and a name,"

and hold himſelf excuſed, becauſe a Monk had originally dictated the preſumption.

Mr. Weſt has preſented ſociety with two Landſcapes, which are equally falſe in deſign and execution: The arborial tints would form a new pattern for a Harlequin's jacket: They are unnatural, abrupt, and chaotic. Yet this may be judging them upon too broad a ſcale, as, from the maſs of maſonry in the foreground, the Preſident might only intend to give us a *peep* at nature, and not a fair and unequivocal proſpect. I know no utility for ſuch pieces as theſe, but to hang them on the door poſts of a *cabaret*, to ſignify it was the *Hole in the Wall!*

Mr. Weſt is ſo fond of the *palpable ſublime*, as to ſacrifice every thing to that propenſity. Hence his figures have the appearance of being drawn from marble originals, and not the delicate and nearly imperceptible beauties of the nudity. Men ſituated like Mr Weſt, ſhould labour to become inſtances of perfection; and when they do not, we feel inclined to lament, that

that the caprices of chance can counterbalance the influence of ſtruggling excellence. Whoever adminiſters patronage to inſufficiency, becomes reſponſible in his character, (whatever may be his feelings,) for all that influx of pernicious predeliction, which commonly is attendant on ſucceſsful folly; and raiſes a horrid warfare in the young boſom, in which *what ſhould be*, becomes obedient to *what is!* A lady of ſome celebrity has very pertinently obſerved, that "nothing great is to be expected from any ſet of Artiſts who are to give only copies of copies." Mr Weſt has aſſuredly made very free with the antique, which is a laudable meaſure in the Diſciple, but ſhews a paucity of thought in the Painter, who boldly ventures to exhibit his deſigns, as the appropriate workings of his own mind. In the picture of *Pylades* and *Oreſtes*, it is evident to the meaneſt virtuoſo, that the *Antinous* in different poſitions, formed the model of the prominent heroes. This is a ſpecies of pilfering that does more credit to the induſtry than the talents of the profeſſor. Of what ſignificance would be the great and profound learning of Michael Angelo to any, if the Artiſt could be equally fortunate in acquiring reputation, without the proud accompaniments of a claſſic education? That idle man who can borrow his neighbour's drapery at pleaſure, will not feel often inclined to faſhion a ſuit for himſelf. That hiſtoric Artiſt who would be really eſtimable, muſt be unequivocally creative.

I think that Mr. Weſt, poſſeſſes more of the mechanical or executive properties of the art, than that general and concomitant knowledge, and ſuperior information, which ſhould characterize thoſe who *eagerly* deſire to become exemplary in the vaſt purſuit: he has all that temperance of deportment, and reſignation of manner, without which, no man can be ſucceſsful in puſhing his fortune within the regal circle of Windſor; he can be always tolerated becauſe he never offends; and by fettering the energies of paſſion, he is permitted to receive the ſmiles of a king, as a counterbalance for the exerciſe of his own original dignity as a man. Why he has been ſo uniformly cheriſhed, where his more poliſhed and ſcientific predeceſſor was ſo unfortunately repelled has been to many a matter of ſurpriſe, though no event ſhould be arranged as ſurpriſing, which is in any way dependant upon the caprices of hereditary power.

T. F.

T. F. Rigaud, R. A.

No. 183. *The Expoſing of Moſes*

This is a moſt inexplicable daub, and will be chronicled as expoſing the Artiſt, and not Moſes—integrally or ſeparately conſidered it has nothing to recommend it to our liking. The brown wench, whom he has with temerity introduced as Pharoah's lovely daughter, would not be tolerated in Hedge-lane; the young law-giver of the Iſraelites, reclines on a ſort of drapery, which cannot be aſſimilated to linen, woollen, ſilk, ſattin, or of Otaheite workmanſhip: his infant head, reclines on a bullock's kidney, and the vegetation of the puddle, on which he ſwims, gives me an idea of the flags of Acheron! Under what pretenſions, or through what manœuvering, this gentleman became an R. A. I know not, but in my honeſt opinion, he can neither conceive, draw, or execute with preciſion.

I am informed that Mr. Rigaud, keeps a garrulous parrot, I think it would not be *mal a propos* if it was taught the following ditty. A knowledge of the tune would be leſs difficult to acquire than the origin and inſertion of the muſcles.

Maſter Rigaud, ſtudy well myology;
Maſter Rigaud, ſtudy oſteology—
Maſter Rigaud, drop theſe *rigs* ſo comical;
Why ſure your brain is crack'd, by ſtudies aſtronomical,
Bow, wow, wow;
Falderiddy, talderiddy, Bow, wow, wow.

Our Engligh painters, are either ſo feeble, or ſo unambitious, that when they get to the *half-way houſe* they ſit themſelves down as bliſsful as if they had got to the end of their journey; it belongs to Satire to whip them from this ſtate of degrading indolence, and goad them to walk on. The ſudden fore-ſhortning of an animal, which was ſo congenial and familiar to the bold though perfect genius of Rubens, would appal the hiſtory painters of this æra, nor do I know any in Europe, who could with a well founded confidence, attempt ſuch an energetic toil, but Monſieur David, of Paris; and though he can delineate the anatomy with the moſt enviable correctneſs, I have ſome doubts, if even he could effect it with a neceſſary enthuſiaſm, and an accordant fidelity.

John Russel, R. A.

No. 142. *A Boy blowing Bubbles*

This academician's performances are ever of that *mediocre* ſort, as neither to entitle him to high approbation or ſevere cenſure

cenſure: he is chiefly confined to heads, where nothing of the God is required to enable the labourer to paſs muſter. Crayon painting at beſt, is but an unworthy purſuit, and in the proſecution of which a vigorous mind would feel impatient and diſdainful. This picture is ſaid to be intended as a preſent from Mr. Pitt, to a certain babbling Etonian, as a frail memorial of his bleſſed converſion from the hereſies of infectious ſiberty.

No. 58. *A Portrait of Hart, the Herbaliſt, by the ſame Artiſt.*

Equally tame, ſpiritleſs, ſmooth, and unimportant. Mr. Ruſſel's attempt to make the beard predominate, has been rather unhappy, as it gives the idea of a human chin larded with the fat of bacon.

T. Gocch.

No. 47. *A Curricle Horſe.*

This is a portrait of a favourite horſe belonging to Lord Sefton, and if the reſemblance is perfect, I have to marvel at his being ſo highly prized. The portrait of the coachman has more truth; there are various other exertions by this artiſt, but none that do him more credit.

G. Farington, R. A.

No. 71. *A view in the High-Street, Oxford.*

This picture is very ably managed, and very little inferior to the beſt efforts of Canaletti! the tone of colouring is finely, yet not laborioufly handled.

No. 90. *A view of Warwick Caſtle, by the ſame Author.*

This is not equally beautiful with the other performances. I do not think he was judicious in the choice of his view: the water is too bald and glaſſy, and the trees not exactly as the Creator meant.

George Morland.

No. 52. *Bargaining for Sheep.*
No. 169. *Interior of a Stable.*
No. 186. *A Farrier's Shop.*

All theſe pictures have the ſame merits and the ſame tendencies: they are replete with ſpirit and nature, but have not their due effect, from the want of ſubordination in the colour-

ing and a neglect in the artiſt, to copy the *minutiæ* of his objects.

It may be ſaid of Mr. Moreland, as a painter, what Mr. Dignum, ſo happily ſaid of Mr. Incledon, as a vocal performer, that the Almighty has taken more pains with him than any other man: yet he muſt not conſider this literally as an encomium, but only as declaratory of a bleſſing, that he peculiarly poſſeſſes, which, if not ſuſtained by ſtudious perſeverance will only be recorded as a drawback upon his general reputation.

It has been the misfortune of this rare artiſt, in his ſhort progreſs hitherto in life, to become the dupe and inſtrument of deſigning men, who have vulgariſed his mind, and made his brilliant talents ſubſervient to their own particular purpoſes, and not his advantage.

I think the creative mind of this young artiſt, has been ſuffered to run wild, and though the ſoil is uncommonly rich, the culture of the produce has been neglected; it has given nouriſhment to many flowers and many weeds. I do not believe that Mr. Morland has any proper ideas of beauty; his neceſſities urge him to inſtantaneous action, and he catches at Nature when ſhe is in a diſhabille, but ſeldom or never paid his devoirs when ſhe was elegantly attractive. I think the better part of his powers lie dormant, from the want of legitimate pride, and it is now probable that they ever may: he is palpably deficient in knowledge of the ſubordination of tints, and the union of colours, and ſeems to gather his laurels ſo careleſly and thankleſsly, that it is a doubt with me, if he would not be as happy in the ſociety of a ploughboy as the *Caracci*!

None of our young artiſts ſeem to have ſufficient fortitude to look diſtreſs boldly in the face, and daſh through all the incumbrances and inconveniences attendant on a probationary ſtate of poverty, to acquire indelible renown, and rewards merely ſanctified; to effect thoſe great purpoſes, they ſhould feel like Rafaelle, a divine glow of boundleſs hope: an enthuſiaſm diſdainful of any reſtraint that fortune can enforce, but alas, they have none of this indiſpenſible energy: they are contented to vegetate like vulgar handicraftſmen, and glide through their being in a middle ſky, when they ſhould all be *Icari*, and ſtruggle to ſurvey the ſun!

S. WRIGHT.

S. Wright, Derby.

No. 107. *An Eruption of Veſuvius.*

No. 232. *A Lake at Dunkeld, in Scotland: Evening, by the ſame Author.*

No. 233. *A Village on Fire, by ditto.*

This truly celebrated Artiſt has honored the Inſtitution, by condeſcending to mingle his choice labours with the *Harp Alley* excellence of a majority of the Royal Academicians. Feeling their importance ſo inordinately, it moves my wonder that theſe upliſted gentlemen do not eagerly contribute, by their own efforts, to the ſupport of that order from whence they derive ſuch prodigious importance, and not give the cavilling world occaſion to remark, that they have been honored without deſert, and retain the mummeries of the inſtitution without gratitude. When I was in Paris, in 1787, they managed thoſe affairs much better: the Royal Academy of Polite Arts there was conducted more nobly: every perſon was admitted to view *gratis*, what was meant as a free diſplay of national genius, for national admiration. With us the motive ſeems cupidity, and the end deception. With the richeſt Monarch in Europe for their patron, the arts of England are literally kept from deſtruction by the votive ſhillings of a motley public, who pay the ſalaries of the profeſſors, and find oil for the lamps in the *plaiſter* and *living* ſchools, though the King arrogates the character of being the high ſupporter of the ſyſtem. But it is a provident aſſumption of dignity, unaccompanied with either riſk, anxiety, or expence! He ſeems to poſſeſs the *furor* of patronage as highly as the tenth Leo, but I have as yet to learn that he is equally munificent.

Sir Francis Bourgeois, R. A.

No. 210. *Sans Culottes taken Priſoners by a Detachment of the Prince of Wales's Light Dragoons.*

This inſignificant and accommodating Chevalier has ſeized a ſubject, that he might pay his lowly court to power, at the expence of truth and the national character. Britiſh ſoldiers are not in the habit of loading a conquered enemy with chains.

No 204. *Children at their Mother's Grave, by the ſame Author.*

A groupe of ill drawn children, ſcratching up the ſod with their nails. In this attempt he has certainly aimed to ſurprize

us, by being comical upon a *grave* ſubject! This, like all his works, ſtrikes me as a mongrel production, involving in its effects all the bad parts of Berghem and Loutherbourg. If his intent is to be ſingular, that aim he has accompliſhed with puerile induſtry.

It is on record, that a Horſe was made a Conſul; that an Old Woman was choſen Pope; and that a Pig taught Greek; then let our wonder ceaſe, that this amiable Knight of the Polar Star was *made* (I am aſhamed to ſay elected) a Royal Academician. I have heard much about the doctrine of colours, and have ſtudied the ſubject myſelf; but this eccentric Painter ſeems to conſider the theme as nugatory, and, contrary to ancient and modern prejudice, makes the hue of *brick-duſt* the primary tint, whether he is pourtraying an angel or a demon, or the ocean or the dry land. This ſurpriſingly modeſt gentleman has taken eſpecial care, in the diſtribution of the paintings in the preſent Exhibition, that if you turn to any point of the compaſs, ſome divine effuſion from his pencil ſhall cheer the vagrant eye.

This incongruous ſprig of honor, and his coadjutor Mr. Smirke, ſeem to have paid more attention to the *frames* than the *canvas*. It is curious to behold their œconomy in arranging the decorative carvings round the rooms: they appear as having zealouſly laboured to be mathematically juſt. Such minor conſiderations in ſuch an eſtabliſhment, make the judicious ſmile. It is ſacrificing nobleneſs to nothingneſs. I think if St. Luke could pay them an opportune viſit, he might feel inclined, in the overflowings of his rage, to hang up the Committee, inſtead of the pictures.

William Redmore Bigg, A.

No. 133. *Birth day preſent to an Old Nurſe.*

Of all the junior Artiſts, Mr. Bigg appears to be the moſt on a level with himſelf. What he is now he was ten years ago, and will be ten years hence; that is, ſuch a delineator of domeſtic life, as would ſatisfy a common, but not an ambitious mind.

Every ſcience is dependent for ſupport upon concomitant ſciences; and to know but a little, and be content with that paucity, in any liberal art we may profeſs to cultivate, it were better not to know any thing. Any profeſſor who is ſatisfied with accompliſhing half meaſures, is a being with half a ſoul, and unfit to aſſociate, even in idea, with thoſe divine ſpirits, who

who have exalted our nature with their endowments, and amended and refined it by their example.

WILLIAM BEECHEY, A. Portrait Painter to Her Majeſty.

No. 127. *Portrait of Mrs. Siddons, with the Emblems of Tragedy.*

This performance does not correſpond with ſome efforts I have heretofore ſeen from the ſame pencil. The figure is not accurately deſigned, and the attitude is affectedly diſguſting. It conveys the ſemblance of a gypſey in ſattin, diſporting at a maſquerade, rather than the murder-loving Melpomene. As a portrait, the figure is too thin for the original; and as a picture, it is too imperfect to be valuable to a connoiſſeur.

Mr. Beechey has this year moſt unaccountably fallen off from himſelf. His pictures are neither ſo rich, ſo graceful, or ſo true, as they were the laſt year. He has ſuffered Mr Hoppner to ſuperſede him, which is a ſufferance that took place while his genius was tipſey, and his enemies vigilant.

He has eight other pictures, none of which operate as ſupremely creditable to his name but No. 22, which is a portrait of a Clergyman, in his academical dreſs. This is a fair, clear, unſophiſticated portrait. We have but three decided portrait painters in the kingdom, which are, Romney, Shee, and Beechey; the reſt are diſeaſed with all Sir Joſhua Reynolds's worſt habits!

I have known many Artiſts infected with what I ſhall denominate the *rage of Chymiſtry*, who have almoſt wholly neglected the rage of truth. They have been violent in their deſires to attain a ſubordinate knowledge, and left the great primary cauſe of pictorial beauty unexplored. Like a military Tyro, who miſtook the order and deſign of tactics, and waſted his hours in the ſtudy of pop-guns, whoſe fate it might be in future to beſiege an Empire!

The blazing exiſtence of Sir Joſhua Reynolds has proved very injurious to the *pictorial fry*, as his merit was manifeſted in the gracefulneſs of his fancy, which no ſtudy can attain; and not in the handling or mechanical parts of the art, which the aſſiduous may acquire, and which even in him was ſlovenly and bad. Hence has ariſen the common lunacy of copying with eagerneſs what was in him a deformity, and leaving the *ſublimities* behind, which alone conferred worth on his productions! American Stuart was the only diſciple of his time who ſurveyed his artifices with diſdain.

EDMUND

Edmund Garvey, R. A.

No. 103. *A View of Rome.*

Another Royal Academician, whoſe qualifications are, if poſſible, more doubtful than any of his compeers! As the beſt application of ſtrength is ſleight, ſo the beſt application of knowledge is utility. And if a man cannot make every the ſqueezings of his brain ſubſervient to the pleaſure or good of others, I think he need not be very ſolicitous about requiring the opinions of futurity from the Sybil's leaf.

J. W. Abbot, Eſq. Honorary.

No. 64. *Landſcape and Cattle.*

This Landſcape, taken in all its component parts, I do not heſitate to pronounce *the very beſt in the Exhibition.* The repoſe and harmony is beautifully conducted: the cattle are nearly as good as Cuyp; and the herbage and water ſo correctly pencilled, that imagination tempts the admirer to diſturb the order of the firſt by his breath, and the latter by a pebble. Look at this ye Garvey's of the Royal Inſtitution, and bluſh yourſelves into contrition and ſorrow.

S. De Wilde.

No. 124. *A Scene in the Children in the Wood.*

This piece involves the portraits of the younger Banniſter, Mrs. Booth, and Mrs. Bland. The aſſumption of feeling has ſo worked upon the muſcles of this favourite ſon of Thalia, as to give him in the *contour* a reſemblance to the immortal Garrick. In oppoſition to the dictates of gallantry, the Ladies are ſacrificed, to give intereſt to the gentleman. This is one of the beſt things of the kind I have ſeen ſince Zoffani laid down the pencil. I wiſh Mr. De Wilde was more attentive to the accompaniments.

J. Ibbetson.

No. 28. *Diſtant View of Angleſea, with the Paſs round the bottom of Penmaenmawr.*

When many of our preſent race of Landſcape painters wiſh to make *a ſtudy*, they do it by their fire-ſides: they take an old periſhed picture of Wynants, Ruyſdale, or Hobbima, or a damaged copy from ſome eminent Artiſt, and *compoſe*—by ſteal-

ing

ing a tree from one, a dock-leaf from another, and a waterfall from a third. By this means we have Flemiſh landſcapes, peopled with Engliſh figures, and the ſame unvaried ſcenes ſerved up *ad infinitum*. Very different is the conduct of Mr. Ibbetſon. His views are taken from nature; and in his pictures we ſee our own country as in a mirror, painted in a ſtile peculiarly his own. This is a very faithful portrait of the place delineated, and pencilled in a maſterly manner.

H. Singleton.

No. 106. *Æneas protecting the Body of Pandarus*

I wiſh Mr. Singleton would guard againſt a French ſtile of painting. The ſhield of Æneas, a ſoldier of *theſe degenerate* days could not lift. It is too undetermined.

O. Humphry.

No. 109. *Portrait of an Armenian Slipper-man.*

Dr. Johnſon once obſerved, that the man who could outſtrip his cotemporaries with his face towards the Weſt, would preſerve his ſuperiority if he turned his face to the Eaſt. I regretted Mr. Humphry's having quitted the painting of miniatures; but his manner of treating crayons gives a force which I never before ſaw, except in *Roſalba*, united with a delicacy that is peculiarly his own.

Signora Anna Tonelli.

No. 348. *Ariadne.*

This is the portrait of the Ducheſs of Cæſerta, an Italian lady of high rank, who being ſaid to reſemble this buſt, aſſumed the character at a maſquerade in Italy. The head-dreſs is eminently graceful; but, though coloured, it retains ſomething of the marble.

R. Freebairn.

No. 81. *The Fountain of Egeria near Rome.*

No. 75. *Subterraneous Ruins of Mecænus's Villa at Tivoli.*

I have ſeen few ſpecimens of the art of perſpective more perfect than theſe. The keeping of the tints in theſe artificial caverns is admirable, the water is ſo ably touched, and the accompaniments ſo ſkilful, that a contemplation of the pictures would

would make me imagine myſelf cold, during the preſſure of a ſultry meridian. The Artiſt has introduced a few figures in Roman habits, which cannot be compared in the ſame ſcale of fitneſs.

H. P. Danloux.

No. 206. *Portrait of a Lady.*

This is a buxom matron, of a moſt reſiſtleſs mein. The Artiſt has at leaſt made her tread with much firmneſs, if not with much grace.

M. Brown.

No. 242. *Portrait of a Gentleman.*

I have no doubt but if Lavater was to meet this gentleman, he would loudly pronounce him as an honeſt fellow, and a lineal deſcendant from Silenus. The jolly God had few prieſts more rubicund. If a hogſhead of wine had ſenſibility, the leer of his eye would make it tremble to the very lees! As a painting, I cannot urge much in its favour; and it is filthily beplaiſtered with a varniſh, which will inevitably crack in all directions. I have ſeen abler efforts from the ſame pencil.

N. Dance Esq. *Honorary.*

No. 161. *A Landſcape.*

When we look at a picture by Claude Lorraine, the enchanting warmth of his tints, and beauty of his ſcenery, almoſt invariably excite a wiſh that the picture could be changed to reality, and we could become inhabitants of the Elyſium, that he repreſents in colours ſo faſcinating.—Very different are the ideas excited by Mr. Dance's picture. It muſt be acknowledged to be nature, and perhaps ſtrictly and peculiarly Engliſh nature; but there runs through the whole a coldneſs—a comfortleſs coldneſs, that chills the ſoul.

This landſcape appears to have been taken at the firſt confirmation of ſummer, when the vernal tint is more general than when the ſeaſon is more advanced, as then the peeviſh Eaſt, and the breezes fraught with innumerable and undefined animalculæ diſcolour and contract the foilage, and partially wither the brighteſt honors of the grove.—This view appears to have been deſigned immediately after the hamlet had been waſhed by a copious ſhower, which gives it an air of *coldneſs* that is uncongenial with our wiſhes, though it is truly natural. It has been the cuſtom of European artiſts, from

from the days of Claude to this period, to make their pictures in the autumnal ſeaſon, that they might avail themſelves of the advantages of that variety of hues, which the approaches of death, ſpreads over decaying animation; for it is my decided opinion, that all plants have their powers of ſympathy and ſenſation, and ſhrink at the commencement of a blight, as much as village hinds, on the aſcertainment of an attorney! The water in the diſtance, is touched in, in a ſlovenly manner, and looks more like a plate of glaſs half ground; the ſhepherd is well drawn, but the legs of the ſheep are thick enough for ſo many oxen.

A. Pether.

No. 15. *Evening.*

This landſcape, is, on the whole, very agreeable, it is a lively repreſentation of nature, in her moſt becoming tints; the clear obſcure is ably managed, the ærial perſpective well underſtood, and the ſubordination of the tints of the back ground delicately mellowed into the horizon—it is in the ſtyle of *Both.*

No. 303. *Evening, a ſcene from Nature, by the ſame Author.*

The diſtances in this picture are very finely wrought, but he is not equally fortunate in the fore-ground; the boat upon the water, is not buoyant, and the broad herbage I apprehend would be conſidered as uncognizable, by Linnœeus.

J. T. Serres.

No. 308. *A Frigate in a hard gale off the Eddyſtone.*

This nautical morſel poſſeſſes but little of the ſupreme taſte and knowledge of the artiſt's deceaſed father: there is an outline of hardneſs to the water, which thoſe who ſtudy deeply could never perceive; they are as determined as the Glacieres of Savoy. If this gentleman would condeſcend to copy one of the fine pictures, by Vandevelde, I am perſuaded he would forego his turgidity of finiſhing.

N. Pocock.

No. 267. *Captain Jones. in his Majeſty's Packet, Cheſterfield, reſcuing the crew of a ſhip that was then ſinking.*

There were three poſitions, which puzzled exceedingly the fourth Henry of France; and thoſe were, to know in what

religion he ſhould die: whether Queen Elizabeth of England, was chaſte, and if the Prince of Orange had any courage. My ſolicitude at preſent is more limited, it is chiefly confined to the ſuppoſition by what means this gentleman could be ſelf-perſuaded to become an artiſt.

S. Gilpin.

No. 227. *A Gentleman on horſeback, bringing up lag hounds to the cover; the portrait by Mr. Reinagle.*

This is the prime picture in the exhibition of its kind. Mr. Gilpin is inferior to Mr. Stubbs, in anatomical knowledge, but is ſuperior to him in grace and genius. The human portrait is not diſreputably finiſhed.

I. L. Mosnier, R. A. (*A foreign Academician.*)

No. 560. *A Portrait of a Lady.*

There is a labour evident through the whole of this picture, which is ineffectual; it is highly finiſhed but *hard*, and gaudy, but not *free*; it conveys all the worſt characteriſtics of the *French ſchool*, and does more honor to the induſtry, than the more noble capabilities of the artiſt; the finiſhing is ſuperfluouſly particular. This I conceive to be the moſt perfect of ſeveral other portraits by the ſame author.

There is a firmneſs and permanency in the colouring of Mr. Moſnier, which I earneſtly recommend to many of our modern portrait painters to imitate, and not the periſhable varniſh deceptions, which, from motives of indolence and ignorance, they ſo eagerly adopt. The late Sir Joſhua Reynolds, painted the preſent Marquis of Drogheda; when a young man, he left this country and went upon his travels, and at his return to his ſeat at Monſtereven in Ireland, where the picture had been conveyed, he found to his ſurprize, that during a period of twenty years, the painting had moſt wonderfully kept pace with his own health, and from ſome powers of ſympathy, communicated by the artiſt, had become brown, exactly in proportion as the peer became bilious from malady. All this ſeeming miracle was effected through the medium of flying varniſhes! this anecdote I had from his lordſhip, when on a viſit in Ireland.

Painters of family pictures, where there are a number of young children, who change like the paſſing cloud, and writers of that ſpecies of poetry which is made up of compliments for conqueſts, the effects of which are liable to be done away, before the ink is dry; are much to be pitied. When, many years ago, Mr. Zoffanii, the painter, began his family picture

of

of the preſent Royal family, there were ten children: he made his ſketch accordingly, and attending two or three times, went on with finiſhing the figures. Sundry circumſtances prevented his being able to proceed. His Majeſty was engaged in buſineſs of more conſequence; her majeſty was engaged; ſome of the princeſſes were engaged, and ſome of the princes were ill; the completion of the picture was conſequently delayed,—when a meſſage came to the artiſt, that another prince was born, and muſt be introduced into the picture. This was not eaſy,—but with ſome difficulty it was done;—all this took up much time,—when a ſecond meſſage came, informing him of the birth of a princeſs, and that the little illuſtrious ſtranger muſt have a place on the canvas. This was impoſſible without a new arrangement; one half of the figures were therefore obliged to be obliterated, and put cloſer together, to make room. To do this was the buſineſs of ſome months, and before the completion a letter came from one of the Maids of Honor, informing the painter there was another addition to the family, for whom a place muſt be found.—" This," cried the artiſt, " *is too much*,—if they cannot ſit with more regu-" larity,—*I* cannot paint with more expedition, and muſt give " it up."

Sir GEORGE BEAUMONT, Bart. *Honorary.*

No. 126. *A Landſcape.*

Had I not been previouſly gratified with Mr. Abbot's extraordinary performance, I ſhould have been inclined to hang with more pleaſure upon this very reſpectable trial of ſkill. I would recommend it to Sir George Beaumont to ſtudy Waterlo, who is a fine maſter to lead a ſtudent into a ſimple and proper choice of nature; in which I think this gentleman is more deficient than in his handling. The tree in the foreground is overbearing; too intruſive, and not beautiful in its ramifications! It forms an arch with its branches, which deſtroys the indiſpenſible conviction, that the growth has been ſpontaneous! The diſtance is managed with a better effect, and the whole deſerving praiſe. I congratulate ſociety upon theſe teſtimonies of laudable endeavour, which prove, that amidſt that ocean of contamination, which ſullies and wrecks ſo many of our flimſy ſprigs of diſtinction, a few of both ſexes are diſcoverable, who have the hardihood to prefer the conſolations ariſing from invigorating ſtudy, to the ſucceeding abominations of what is termed a life of faſhion.

 Nothing

Nothing proves the imperfectneſs of our optical organization ſo clearly, as the conviction, that all Artiſts view nature differently; and yet I believe none view her accurately. The beauty and intricacy of her works are beyond our powers of conception and delineation; and we only attempt to copy what is in its lovelineſs inimitable: But I will not be diffuſive on this theme, leſt I ſhould check that ardour which is ſo neceſſary to the purpoſes of ſocial improvement.

P. Reinagle, A.

No. 167. *Eſſex County Hall, with a View of part of Chelmsford.*

This view is not wanting in general merit. The perſpective is accurately juſt; but, conſidered as a whole, it is not entitled to take the lead in repreſentations of this tendency. This Artiſt is more minute than Mr. Farington, but has not his majeſty of thought. Perhaps I ſhould think better of his picture, if the blue ſky was leſs daring and offenſive.

Richard Weſtall, R. A. Elect.

No. 16. *A Portrait of a young Gentleman.*

This effort is as puerile as the ſubject.

No. 111. *Portrait of an Artiſt.*

This is a reſemblance of the Artiſt's own delectable ſelf. It is ſaid to be a coarſe and unfavourable likeneſs. At any rate, the picture is not eminently favourable to his profeſſional character. I expected that the introductory teſtimonies would be more perfect, that were to affix the ſeal upon his diplomatic character.

No. 113. *A View near London. A Sketch.*

If the timely modeſty implied in the word Sketch, had not operated to my comfort, I ſhould have been ſick of this monſtrous inſtance of affectation. The only viſible object to fix the attention, is the cupola of St. Paul's, which looks like a pepper box in a ſmoky chimney.

No. 198, *Minerva, painted for the Council Chamber of the City of London.*

"Angels and miniſters of grace defend us." Under what baneful impulſe could this young man be induced to make this gigantic

gigantic attempt? The radix of true conception is not as yet inmixed in the ſoil of his young imagination:

Nondum ſtruxit Hugo, vix fundamenta locavit,
Det Deus ut poſſit dicere ſtruxit Hugo?

This lady I do affirm does not beam a divinity: ſhe is all legs and thighs, like the late Sir Thomas Robinſon. The drawing of the foot, would diſgrace a ſchool-boy, and the folds of her drapery, are all unaſcertained and daſhed in at random; ſhe is evidently either pregnant or padded, and ſeems prouder of her *belly* than her *head*, but this perhaps was a diſcreet compliment to city prejudices. To be brief, it is a brazen, forward minx, unknown to Jove, to Prometheus, and *Alma Mater*: the goddeſs it may be preſumed, is ſo offended, that ſhe will have no influence whatever in Mr. Weſtall's affairs, much leſs bear him to heaven upon her ſhield, that he might ſteal ſome neceſſary fire.

As I believe there are none living who are gifted or illuminated with that ſupreme capacity, which will enable a profeſſor of painting to be a received arbiter of the complex art, it ſhould not excite aſtoniſhment, that I am apparently ſevere towards Mr. Weſtall, of whoſe genius I do not think cheaply; he has capability, but it wants pruning and melioration; he has been precipitated to the command of a fleet, before he well knew the principles of navigation! Hence the wildneſs and uncertainty of his movements—there may be licentiouſneſs of manner in painting, as deſtructive to the neceſſary fame of genius, as licentiouſneſs of manners on a moral ſcale, would be to the required reputation of a member of the ſocial ſyſtem: each may be partially reſpected, even under this drawback upon propriety, but neither can be uniformly eſteemed, without a rigorous obſervance of every preſcribed duty annexed to the ſituation.

As the *graces* of refined nature, are recorded to have been moſt impreſſive from beauty in diſtreſs, and *greatneſs* from ſuch memorable events as Seneca expiring, it ſhould be the invariable taſk of our ripening artiſts, to compare their own ideas upon ſuch governing ſubjects, with the compoſitions of the moſt perfect maſters of the foreign ſchools; and though denied a reference to Apelles, Protogenes, Parrhaſius, and Zeuxis, there are ſome moſt excellent examples extant. But it muſt be recollected that they are to be only *ſtudied* not *copied!* Michael Angelo, is a fine roman diſh of roaſt beef, from which our affected branches of Saint Luke, never fail to cut and come again; but the unfortunate iſſue of the toil is, that they

they only adopt his wildneſses and incongruities, and leave his divine graces as the cock left the gem, untouched, becauſe they are unable to eſtimate their value! Goltzius, would be as true an original for ſuch minds: There are few things more diverting to me, than to ſee ſome of our modern artiſts attempt the embodying of an Allegory, they imagine the idea is complete, where they make Virtue in a clean ſmock; Jove with an indented forehead; Vulcan as a drunken blackſmith; and Mars bedaubed with red oker!

The general reliance upon the force of *puffing* in the newſpapers of the metropolis, among our little artiſts, as well as our little authors, is indicative of feebleneſs in both, and ought to be much regretted, as the ſyſtem is now ſo methodically purſued, that the application of a few guineas to paragraph writers, will make any wretched dolt conſpicuous for talents which he does *not* poſſeſs, while the man of real ability is almoſt unknown, as he diſdains to feed this abominable ſource of corruption and ruinous falſhood. Truth and Virtue have ſcarcely any ſupport whatever, in our periodical publications!

R. FREEBAIRN.

No. 264. *An ancient Roman Bridge over the Arno, the ruins of the villa of Mecænas, in the diſtance.*

I ſhall make no apology for the introduction of this gentleman's name a ſecond time, in this imperfect ſtricture. I am induced to the meaſure by a grateful impulſe of acquired ſatisfaction; this claſſical eſſay is of that ſort which ſteals imperceptibly into the embraces of ſober judgment: there is a ſerenity and calmneſs in this deſerving artiſt's performances, which in a degree dignifies my nature; the ſight of them makes me penſive and reconciled to the ruin which occurs around me, unheeded by the frivolous and the unthinking; they are tranquil ſcenes which preſs gently and almoſt holily upon my underſtanding; like the fineſt Compoſitions in ſacred muſick! they might tend to harmoniſe the chords of a perturbed ſpirit; and I ſurely ought to acknowledge myſelf obliged to him, who can ſteal me ſo harmleſsly and ſmoothly from a recollection of mortal woes.

I am anxiouſly willing to aid that lever, which ſhould lift diffident ability into the mart of public munificence, and give him a fair opportunity to be noticed and honored. My antipathies are only excited by the bold irruptions of ſauey Inanity and unauthoriſed claimants upon ſocial reſpect.

MAR-

—— Marlow.

No. 248. *View of part of the City of Lyons, with the old caſtle of Pierre Enciſe.*

I have heretofore been induced to think reputably of Mr. Marlow: but as there is a *bathos* in poetry, ſo I perceive there may be a ſinking or declenſion in painting; to ſpeak juſtly, this performance degrades his name: it is infinitely worſe than any thing I ever ſaw before from the ſame origin, and is untrue, unqualified, confuſed in its effect, and muddy in the manner.

G. Garrard.

No. 91. *Portraits of Mares and Foals.*

An undeſcribeable falling off from his earlier exertions: this opinion ſhould be inſpiriting and not diſpiriting to Mr. Garrard, as he really may approach to excellence if he can reſolve to do ſo, and will act up to the tenor of the reſolution.

No man, but particularly an Artiſt, ſhould ſuffer any day to conclude, without the performance of ſuch obligatory duties as may, upon reflection, reconcile the man to himſelf: our time is ſo limited, and our faculties ſo imperfect, that the utmoſt of all ſublunary endeavours muſt fall infinitely ſhort of perfection; and as this truth is ſelf-evident from all that is, or has been, how much like a lunatic does he appear, who ſuffers his indolence to circumvent both the eſſence of his knowledge and the entreaty of his neceſſities?

Thomas Lawrence, R. A. Elect. *Principal Painter in ordinary to his Majeſty.*

No. 78. *A Portrait of a Gentleman.*

This is a likeneſs of Sir Gilbert Elliot: as this portrait is not finiſhed, I ſhall forbear to inveſtigate its merits or demerits.

No. 115. *Portrait of an Archbiſhop.*

This is a likeneſs of the ſpiritual lord of Canterbury; it conveys a full idea of the florid, well-fed viſage of this fortunate arch-prelate; and a monk better appointed never ſighed before the tomb of Becket.

No.

No. 131. *Portrait of a nobleman.*

This is a likeneſs of Lord Auckland, a man to whom the capricious Goddeſs has been equally bountiful: this heterogenous nobleman is ſo fantaſtically enveloped in drapery, that I cannot aſcertain what is meant for his coat, and what for the curtain—they are all of the ſame ſtrength and importance: this is deſtroying the ſubordination of objects moſt completely. Perhaps his Lordſhip is pourtrayed in the very act of writing his glorious manifeſto at the Hague, as he appears to think ſo intenſely on the theme, that his eye-balls ſeem burſting from their ſpheres!

No. 173. *Portrait of a Lady of Quality.*

This is a whole length of Lady Emily Hobart, in the character of Juno: the face is chalky and ſickly; the robe is ſo white, and ſo unincumbered with ſhadow, that it might paſs for an habiliment of Porcelain texture: while I viewed it, I was betrayed from a recollection of the ſurrounding objects, and momentarily imagined, that if I caſt a ſtone at the veſtment I ſhould ſhiver it to pieces.

No. 181. *Portrait of a Gentleman.*

This I underſtand is the likeneſs of a Mr. Knight, and is repulſive in the attitude: it fills me with the idea of an iraſcible pedagogue explaining Euclid to a dunce!

Mr Lawrence began his profeſſional career upon a falſe and deluſive principle. His portraits were delicate but not true, and attractive but not admirable—and becauſe he met the approbation of a few faſhionable ſpinſters (which, it muſt be admitted, is a ſort of inticement very intoxicating to a *young* mind) vainly imagined that his labors were perfect—his fertile mind is overrun with weeds—appearing to do well to a few, may operate to our advantage in morals, but will not as applicable to the exertion of profeſſional talents: many have caught a tranſitory fame from the ravings of ideotiſm, but none have retained celebrity but thoſe who have paſſed through the fiery ordeal of general judgment—There appears to be a total revolution in all the accuſtomed obligations of our being: men can do as well, and be as much reſpected now, after the forfeiture of character, as before; and Artiſts ſeem to think, that they can paint as well, and be as much encouraged, without a knowledge of the common elements of their profeſſion,

ſeſſion, as with it! This is ſurely the Saturnalia of vice and inſignificance.

D. Pellegrini.

No. 79. *A Bacchante.*

This is an indelicate and meretricious performance, and can only be pleaſing to tottering voluptuaries: the drapery is bad, and the whole appearance of this wanton inmate of Comus, juſtifies the axiom, that

"Vice to be hated, needs but to be ſeen."

one might believe that a great portion of thoſe painters who have exhibited this year were in the pay of the decrepid Earl ....., to force his ſenſes to the allurements of indecency, as to do them juſtice, I never ſaw a finer ſhew of naked boſoms and *all that !!!*

W. Miller.

No. 101. *Portrait of a Phyſician of the Univerſity of Cambridge.*

A firm, faithful picture, executed obedient to ſome of the beſt principles of the art.

I know not from what particular cauſe it proceeds, but this gentleman's name has never been ſtrengthened by a due portion of fame: the reaſon I muſt preſume is, that he is not in habits of intimacy, or, more truly ſpeaking, *intrigue*, with thoſe embrazened blockheads, who now ſcribble upon the theme. To ſpeak plainly, we have ſcarce any perſon now, who deſcants or writes upon the *Fine Arts*, but thoſe who know little or nothing about the ſubject! Hence are our periodical works filled with abſurd and deſtructive criticiſms.—I very much admire the noble ingenuouſneſs of Dr. Moore, who, in his "View of Society and Manners," very modeſtly expreſſes himſelf thus: "Conſcious of my ignorance in the myſteries of "connoiſeurſhip, I ſay nothing of the pictures;" ſpeaking of the Gallery at Wolfenbuttle—It is not in a ſmall degree diſgraceful to the Artiſts, and diſadvantageous to the purſuit, that almoſt all our pictorial treatiſes in this country, are written by perſons whoſe qualifications did not ſquare with their ambition: it is, in my opinion, truly neceſſary for all profeſſional men to reſiſt this improper interference as much as poſſible, inaſmuch as the national character ſuffers among foreigners,

reigners, on the great points of taſte and judgment, from the peruſal of ſuch works, either in the original, or through the medium of a tranſlation.

It is not many months ſince a vain-glorious Divine publiſhed, in quarto, the firſt volume of, what he called, a *Hiſtory of the Arts*, with a promiſe of two ſucceeding volumes at a future period. The book was dedicated to the King, and therefore purchaſed by the Royal Academy; but as it appeared that, in the courſe of the volume, there were many compliments paid to one Artiſt, and no notice taken of the reſt, the majority of the Painters thought that this *neglect* was abuſe by *inuendo*: —they determined to caſt a ſtigma on the book, and throw it out of the Somerſet-houſe Library. For this purpoſe an Artiſt, from whoſe work a late popular print has been engraved, made a motion to the following effect: "That, as the Royal Academicians had been induced to purchaſe a book relative to the Arts, which book was unworthy of a place in the Academical Library, the ſaid book ſhould be removed from the ſhelves, with marks of degradation and diſgrace." This was debated for ſome time with great warmth, until one Gentleman, wiſhing to end the diſputation, ſuggeſted, that before they threw this kind of unprecedented obloquy on the volume, it would not be amiſs for them to *read it*. To ſo reaſonable a propoſition no man could object, and the further conſideration of the motion was put off until the next public meeting, which happened to be for the purpoſe of electing three Royal Academicians. Moſt of the Members were preſent, and debates ran high, ſome of the writer's friends aſſerting that the Royal Academy *had no right* to throw out the book, becauſe the King had bought it. This produced a queſtion, With whoſe money? And being put to the vote, ten held up their hands for its being retained, and five for its being diſcarded. This was objected to as an irregular mode of proceeding, becauſe many of the Members being otherwiſe engaged, had not held up their hands at all; and it was therefore propoſed it ſhould be balloted, but the ballot was over-ruled, and the firſt vote remains on the books:—this, it muſt be admitted, was a moſt ridiculous ſquabble about a performance, which muſt be approved the more the leſs it is underſtood.

JOHN HOPPNER, A. *Portrait Painter to his Royal Highneſs the Prince of Wales.*

No. 36. *Portrait of a Lady of Quality.*

This is a ſpirited likeneſs of Lady Caroline Capel: the drapery is fancifully diſplayed; the dog in the foreground is

is ill-drawn, the child incorrect, and the whole aſſemblage ſeem frightened!

No. 155. *Portrait of a Lady.*

This is a very charming picture of Mrs. Parkyns, and does much credit to the Artiſt.

No. 191. *A Gale of Wind, by the ſame Artiſt.*

This is a ſlight but meritorious performance. The ſpray of the ſea is better depicted than any other ſimilar attempt I have lately ſeen, and though many degrees behind *Backhuyſen*, may nevertheleſs claim attention, and ſome praiſe. To be very eſtimable as a marine painter, it is incumbent on the profeſſor to do what *Backhuyſen* did, that is, to go to ſea in a tempeſt, ſketch the billows in the very zenith of their convulſion, and embody and harmonize the whole when the ſtorm has ceaſed, and taſte can regulate reflection.

Hiſtorical Painting has been very properly arranged as the more ſublime and difficult province of the arts, and as it may be conducted by profeſſors of rare ability to anſwer the nobleſt purpoſes of our nature, its encouragement ſhould be proportioned to its uſes. Of all the poliſhed nations of which we have received any account, there never were any, where the perſonal vanity of the inhabitants, was ſo ludicrouſly apparent as in theſe realms; here all human beings of all claſſes wiſh to poſſeſs their own vile portraiture for momentary adoration, and ſeem almoſt wholly regardleſs of any other production of the Arts, which ſhould involve a general intereſt, as being generally applicable to ſome extraordinary event, as dear to the popular memory as contemplation: it is owing to this deſtructive impulſe that our annual Exhibitions are crouded, tier over tier, with the repulſive reſemblances of ſilken peers, fat drivellers, ſilly uglineſs, and ſimpering dowagers, and ſo reſtricted a portion of the encumbered walls allotted, to the cheering emanations of ſuperior genius.

FRANCIS WHEATLY, R. A.

No. 122. *Spring.* No. 187. *Winter.*

Whenever Mr. Wheatley preſents us with a rural Nymph whom he wiſhes to be peculiarly impreſſive, he decorates her head with a profuſion of party coloured ribbands, like a maniac in Coventry, which play in the breeze, offenſive to thought and propriety. As this is not the character of our village

Daphnes, why make them ſo prodigiouſly fine at the expence of truth? The ornaments of a pretty woman of rank cannot be too ſimple; and the beſt excuſe that can be offered for their blazing gewgaws, is, that ſuch unwholeſome vanity gives bread to the Artizan, while they raiſe a ſmile on the cheek of philoſophy.

Our Artiſts have been faſcinated with ideas in perſpective, that only allure to deceive; they are bewitched with the conſequence without paying due reſpect to the cauſe: and becauſe they have read that Vandyke was accoutred in ſilk and ſattin, believe that it is every man's deſert, who profeſſes the Arts, to be ſumptuous in his raiment, without duly conſidering that Vandyke ſtudied, without intermiſſion, for years, to acquire that pre-eminence in the ſcale of ſociety, which, even when acquired, but imperfectly warrants ſuch exhibitions of ruinous arrogance.

T. PHILLIPS.

No. 11. *Cupid diſarmed by Euphroſyne.*

The head of Euphroſyne is not unlike Angelica. There is ſomething in this eſſay that proves the Artiſt may be better when he will.

C. F. DE BREDA.

No. 68. *Portrait of a Swediſh Nobleman in the national dreſs.*

This is between the extremes of "good and bad imagination!"

No. 88. *Portrait of a Lady of Quality.*

The Queen of Grief.

L. J. COSSE.

No. 271. *Genius illuminating the World.*

This ſurprizing attempt makes me recollect *Bonnel Thornton's* exhibition ſome years ſince, where a poor genius was repreſented, as making his way through the world without breeches!

W. ARTAUD.

No. 315. *Portrait of a Philoſopher.*

This is an accurate likeneſs of Dr. Prieſtley. Every Briton ſhould bluſh when he ſurveys the portraiture of this great man!

MINIATURES.

MINIATURES.

G. A. Keman.

No. 453. *Horatius entering Rome, &c. &c. and four Portraits.*

Theſe pictures are, in the aggregate well painted and productive of a good effect.

I. Kirk.

No. 454. *Love tormenting the Soul.*
No. 479. *A frame with Miniatures, fancy.*

The drawing of theſe is good and they are well painted. I am ſurpriſed that this artiſt ſhould go from large to Miniature painting; I think it was quitting the higher for the lower department.

R. Collins.

No. 460. *Portrait of Mr. Wilſon, the manager of the European Muſeum.*

This is extremely like the original, and a tolerable picture.

S. Shelly.

No. 466. *Twelve Portraits.*

Theſe portraits ſpeaking generally, are not ſo well as I have ſeen of this artiſt; but his hiſtorical morſel of Youth and Beauty (No. 386) does him honor; it is unqueſtionably the beſt ſimilar attempt in the multifarious collection; it combines ſome of the beſt properties of the art, and proves that the artiſt has an inquiſitive and comprehenſive mind.

H. Bone.

No. 473. *Portrait of an Artiſt, in Enamel.*
No. 474. *Ditto in Enamel.*

Theſe are executed in a poor, purply and cadaverous ſtyle, and the effect is very bad. The portrait of a nobleman, by this

this artiſt, No. 534, is in water colours, and more ably managed.

No. 546. *A Sleeping girl in Enamel, by the ſame Artiſt.*

This is a copy from a very good picture, by the late Sir Joſhua Reynolds, and is altogether, the beſt picture in enamel I have ſeen of this artiſt, and the beſt picture in enamel in the room: the effect is bold and the ſtyle ſo much ſuperior to his other efforts, that I can with difficulty reconcile it to myſelf, that they are all the offspring of the ſame imagination.

R. Higgs.

No. 496. *Portrait of a Nobleman, in Enamel.*

A very bad ſtyle, poor and bald in colouring as well as drawing, and reſembles China painting, more than enamel.

G. Englehart.

No. 505. *Portraits of a Lady and her two Daughters.*

This is very inferior to the former productions of this artiſt; it is piteous when the movements of a deſerving artiſt are crab-like.

C. Shirreff.

No. 512. *Two Bacchants.*

This is the beſt miniature I have ſeen by this artiſt, and the moſt unexceptionable in the room, except No. 386.

W. Craft.

No. 523. *A Portrait in Enamel.*

If there is any merit in the compoſition of this picture, the perſon who prepared the colours is intitled to it; if merit conſiſted in ſize, it would have the greateſt ſhare of all the enamels.

W. Birch.

No. 456. *Portrait of and Artiſt in Enamel.*

This gentleman executes with more preciſion than boldneſs.

P. Jean.

P. Jean.

No. 529. *Maternal happineſs, in the centre Signora Storace, in the character of My Grandmother; a Turkiſh-jew, and ſix others.*

The jew is the beſt handled portrait of the whole; I have ſeen better pictures by this artiſt.

W. Wood.

No. 545. *Nine Portraits.*

This is a young artiſt and promiſes to be at the head of his profeſſion.

H. Spicer.

No. 357. *A Portrait of a Gentleman.*

Thoſe who deſire an inveterate likeneſs, involved in a good picture, will apply to this gentleman.

R. Bowyer.

No. 541. *Portrait of a Lady.*

A very large piece of ivory.

A miniature painter, is among artiſts, what a bachelor is among men: a creature who is reluctantly admitted to be of the ſame ſpecies and order, and who ſo contracts his movements and journies in ſo narrow a path, that the great ends of his being are not fulfilled. He may be ſaid to whiſper and not talk; to vegetate with caution, but can never be exuberant and generouſly unfold his maſculine properties in the propitious beam of day. No man I am perſuaded, can be a miniature painter, with willingneſs, who has a large and beneficent heart—an Aurelian and a man milliner ſhould congregate in the ſame pariſh.

DRAWINGS.

Mr. Paul Sandby's drawings, No. 328, 367, 381, ſhould be mentioned as exertions of the firſt order; they are cabinet gems of exquiſite note.

Mr.

Mr. Weſtall has ſeveral drawings in a manner ſomewhat peculiar to himſelf: they are tinted with what may be termed *nicety*, perhaps with Milk of Roſes, and conſequently alluring to the vulgar, but are wholly deficient in thoſe grand traits of conception, and truth of outline, which makes the ſlighteſt touches of *Parmegiano* ſo valuable to poſterity.

Mr. Chinnery has ſome portraits, No. 380, which highly pleaſed me: among the budding canditates for fame, this riſing young Artiſt is the moſt prominent. His progreſs has been rapid almoſt beyond example: he has rather adopted a new ſtyle of painting, ſomewhat after the manner of Coſway.

Mr. M. A. Rooker's drawings are Nature rather too tenderly repreſented.

Mr. Downman's portraits, No. 360, are *vaſtly pretty* but not excellent.

Mr. Hodges's Indian Views place him next to Mr. Sandby, in the ſcale of delineative glory.

Mr. Bartolozzi's drawings of the Human Figure, No. 403 and 404, denote him as the Achilles of the art.

Mr. Wyatt has informed the rich world what *ought* to be done, by his noble deſigns this year: yet why ſhould Mr. Wyatt give himſelf this trouble to prove his great powers and knowledge, when an ignorant Bricklayer can *command* all the buſineſs of the realm without any?

The SCULPTURE, this year, is lamentably deficient!

This exhibition, on the whole, is ſuch as indicates a rapid decay of that ſpecies of merit, which conſtitutes an able artiſt, our diſciples in the national ſchools of deſign, are like our diſciples in the varied ſchools of morality and politeneſs, chiefly aiming at the acquiſition of what a great mind would conſider as trivial, and altogether neglecting the nobler branches appertaining to the ſcience.

FINIS.